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enter in too great a volume they are certain to disarrange the assimilating process. If the volume of total immigration is likely at any time to become so large as to make ineffective our forces of assimilation, then this volume

should be decreased by restrictive measures; if the elements comprising any particular group or race, no matter how few in number relatively, are unassimilable into our American life then these too should be restricted.

The Industrial Significance of Immigration

By W. JETT LAUCK¹

Former Secretary, National War Labor Board, Washington, D. C.

DURING President Roosevelt's administration the Congress established an Immigration Commission and provided it liberally with funds so that it might make a satisfactory inquiry into all phases of the immigration problem. It was composed of three members selected from each branch of the Congress, and three representatives of the general public named by the President. This body began its work in 1907 and submitted its voluminous report three years later. The original investigation which was conducted as to the economic aspects of immigration included within its scope all the basic industries of the country. All phases of the industrial significance of immigration were exhaustively studied and analyzed. The final conclusions and recommendations which were based on this inquiry may be said to be representative and entirely acceptable for the period immediately preceding the war. They were, in brief, as follows:

1. While the American people, as in the past, welcome the oppressed of other lands, care should be taken that immigration be such both in quality and quantity so as not to make too difficult the process of assimilation.

2. Since the existing law and further special legislation recommended in this re-

port deal with the physically and morally unfit, further general legislation concerning the admission of aliens should be based primarily upon economic or business considerations touching the prosperity and economic well-being of our people.

3. The measure of the rational, healthy development of a country is not the extent of its investment of capital, its output of products, or its exports and imports, unless there is a corresponding economic opportunity afforded to the citizen dependent upon employment for his material, mental and moral development.

4. The development of business may be brought about by means which lower the standard of living of the wage-earners. A slow expansion of industry which would permit the adaption and assimilation of the incoming labor supply is preferable to a very rapid industrial expansion which results in the immigration of laborers of low standards and efficiency, who imperil the American standard of wages and conditions of employment.

* * * * *

8. The investigations of the Commission show an oversupply of unskilled labor in basic industries to an extent which indicates an oversupply of unskilled labor in the industries of the country as a whole, a condition which demands legislation restricting the further admission of such unskilled labor.

It is desirable in making the restriction that—

(a) A sufficient number be debarred to produce a marked effect upon the present supply of unskilled labor.

¹Author of: *The Immigration Problem* (with Prof. J. W. Jenks) (1911); *Reports of U. S. Immigration Commission*, Vols. IV-XVIII,—The Editor.

(b) So far as possible, the aliens excluded should be those who come to this country with no intention to become American citizens or even to maintain a permanent residence here, but merely to save enough, by the adoption, if necessary, of low standards of living, to return permanently to their own home country. Such persons are usually men unaccompanied by wives and children.

(c) So far as possible the aliens excluded should also be those who, by reason of their personal qualities or habits, would least readily be assimilated or would make the least desirable citizens.

In considering the bearing of immigration on industrial conditions and relations, the broad, fundamental principles enunciated by the Immigration Commission are still worthy of acceptance without reservation. The actual conditions which it found before the war do not exist at present, but the dominant tendency is toward a revival of these conditions. Whatever our constructive program for immigration may be, it should, above everything else, provide measures for the prevention of the development of such industrial conditions as unrestricted immigration had produced before the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in 1914.

THE EFFECTS OF THE WAR

During the four years of the war immigration practically ceased as compared with the prewar period. It has been calculated that if immigration had continued at the same rate during the five years beginning July 1, 1914, as it had been during the five years preceding that date, a total of 6,316,425 newcomers would have entered the United States as contrasted with actual arrivals to the number of only 1,172,679. When the net immigration is considered—the excess of immigrant arrivals over aliens leaving the country—the small accretion to our population and working forces during the

war period becomes even more apparent. During the five fiscal years, beginning with 1914 and ending with 1919, the net immigration was only 431,884, as against 3,316,146 during the five years preceding the war.¹

This decline in the annual addition to our labor supply occurred in the face of an unprecedented industrial expansion to meet the requirements of the war and when the working forces of our mines, mills and factories were being reduced to supply men for our fighting forces. As a consequence, the excess in the labor supply quickly disappeared and finally the demand outran the supply. Through the attempted standardization of wages and working conditions by the government procurement agencies, recent immigrant workmen were arbitrarily placed on the same basis as the native born. Their earning power increased. A permanent interest in the industries in which they worked and in the communities in which they lived was aroused by pronounced efforts towards their industrial assimilation and general Americanization which had hitherto been entirely lacking. Those who were called to the colors were taught to speak and write English and were thrown into daily contact with native Americans. Labor unions during the war period also successfully organized and brought to a practical belief in their tenets an unprecedented number of foreign-born workmen, as is shown by the growth in the textile, clothing, mining, iron and steel and other unions, and the part played by the immigrant workmen in the recent steel strike. In may be said in brief that the war period made possible a large measure of industrial assimilation of the recent immigrant workers. At the time of the signing of the Armistice, organized

¹*Immigration and the Labor Supply*, by F. Leslie Hayford, Dupont Magazine, August, 1920.

labor, and the American wage-earners in general, had attained a position where they were exerting a far-reaching influence upon the foreign-born workers. The immigrants already resident here had ceased to be a menace to the aspirations of trade unionists, or to American standards of work and compensation.

THE POST-WAR PERIOD

During the two years which have elapsed since the cessation of hostilities this situation has entirely changed. Early in 1919 an exodus of foreign-born workmen began. Great numbers who had been debarred from communication with their home countries for several years were anxious to return to renew relations with their families and friends. Others wished to take the savings which they had accumulated during the war and purchase farms, homes or businesses, under the advantageous conditions offered in their devastated or impoverished home countries. Still others who elected to remain in this country used their savings to send for their wives, children or relatives. On the other hand, the people of Europe were turning their faces towards America as the hope of escape from oppressive taxes, unsatisfactory political conditions, or as the means of repairing the losses which they had suffered during the war. The net result was that, immediately following the Armistice, immigration began to grow in volume, but for many months the incoming tide was offset by the unprecedented number of departures of alien immigrants who had been here before the war, and the net gain in population was small. Moreover, the new arrivals consisted of an unusually large proportion of women and children, and as a consequence, no important additions were made to our skilled or unskilled labor forces.

Not until the beginning of the present year was there any noteworthy gain in arrivals over departures. For the entire fiscal year ending June 30, 1920, the excess of immigrant aliens admitted over immigrant aliens departing was only 141,686. The net gain in immigrant males was slightly less than 10,000, while the excess of female arrivals over departures was more than 150,000. During the past six months, however, there has been a steady growth of immigration which has overtaxed the government's facilities for handling the new arrivals, and which indicates a volume of immigration which will surpass all prewar records. The most significant aspect of the situation also consists in the reports from abroad as to what the future developments will be unless measures are taken by this country to restrict the incoming tide. Steerage accommodations are booked for months ahead, thousands of others from the countries of southern and eastern Europe are reported to be seeking passage, and the peoples of central Europe are stated to be awaiting the formal arrangement of peace and the removal of the existing barriers to embark for this country in unprecedented numbers.

Since the signing of the Armistice, discussion of the immigration question has passed through two distinct phases. The first centered around an agitation for the encouragement of immigration to replenish the unskilled labor supply which had been depleted during the war and by the unusual exodus of foreign-born workmen after the war. Estimates as to the labor needs of the country as put forward by the various interested persons and organizations ranged between three and four million unskilled workmen. Measures have been taken to encourage immigration and educational ef-

forts have been made to persuade immigrant workmen already resident here that their real interests would be best subserved by permanent residence in the United States and not by returning to their home countries. These activities have evidently arisen from the belief of certain groups of large employers that in immigration not only lies the way for further industrial expansion but also for weakening the power of labor organizations and in destroying the ascendancy which wage-earners in general had secured from the war-time curtailment of the labor supply.

In the face of these conditions, labor until recently has appeared indifferent and inert. The increasing volume of immigration during the past few months, however, the rapid development of unemployment and the widespread propaganda which is being conducted by certain interests for an alleged open shop, has recently aroused the labor organizations to strong protests and to the demand for legislative action. The general recommendation has been made that the Congress should absolutely exclude all forms of immigration for a period of time sufficient for the formulation of a permanent policy which would permit the industrial assimilation according to American standards of the incoming immigrant labor supply. Thus far no specific or detailed proposals as to a permanent policy have been submitted. The general impression seems to be that the present session of the Congress, because of the pressure of fiscal matters, will not have time to prepare immigration legislation, and, pending real constructive action, temporary measures for restriction or absolute exclusion should be adopted.

The existing situation is undoubtedly fraught with the greatest significance, not only from the standpoint

of the relations between capital and labor, but also from the public point of view. Although the public is interested in the proper recruiting of our labor supply, the continuance of the present flow of immigration in the face of the existing business depression will lead to destitution and suffering in our industrial communities and in a large number of foreign-born workmen becoming public charges as was the case during the latter half of 1907 and the winter of 1908. Even if unemployment were not developing, because of the absolute absence of housing facilities, deplorable congestion, unsanitary living conditions and general unwholesome conditions in industrial localities would inevitably follow a sudden influx of immigrants at this time. Our educational and other facilities for the Americanization of the newcomers from abroad are also woefully lacking. There is also the political danger from extreme, revolutionary agitation, which will be intensified if industrial conditions do not improve.

The menace to labor is acute and immediate. Unrestricted immigration will mean an oversupply of labor and the danger of a lowering of standards of work and compensation. What is of greater significance, it will make possible the weakening of labor organizations in general, and the probable disruption of unionism, as it has done in the past in certain sections of our basic industries, as in coal-mining, iron and steel, and textile manufacturing, where great masses of immigrant workmen can be used with practically no previous training or experience. Unrestricted immigration also holds forth the danger of the destruction of an intelligent, constructive, evolutionary control of the labor movement, and the substitution for the present liberal, but sound, leadership of organized labor of a revolutionary and impractical régime.

If industrial conditions continue unfavorable, the immigrant workmen who have already either directly or indirectly been brought under the influence of extreme economic doctrines will undoubtedly become receptive to the teachings of revolutionary agitators, not only from the standpoint of the industrial system, but also from the point of view of the control and direction of the labor movement itself.

The greatest danger to the public and to the sound and intelligent prosperity of business and industry at the present time is to be found in the misguided ideas of certain groups of large employing interests, such as those typified by Mr. Gary of the Steel Corporation, and the advocates of the so-called "open shop movement." Their attitude and activities can only be charitably explained by the statement that they are entirely lacking in a real intelligent insight into present-day tendencies and the real elements of an enlightened industrial statemanship, for otherwise the conclusion must be reached that they are insincere and sinister. They may hope through the artificial stimulation of immigration and the development of an oversupply of labor, possibly to bring around a temporary reduction in wages and an impairment of existing standards of work. They can not look forward, however, to a permanent weakening of unionism, for their own activities will either strengthen unionism or entirely destroy unionism, and in bringing about the impairment of organized labor, as it is now controlled and directed, Mr. Gary and his associates will encompass their own destruction. From the standpoint of the stockholders of the Steel Corporation, and other financial interests which they represent, their last stage will be worse than present conditions. As a matter of fact, they will, if successful in their

efforts, have ignorantly committed financial and industrial suicide. This conclusion may be demonstrated briefly by what will undoubtedly happen, if immigration is unrestricted, in the event of another strike in the coal-mining or the steel industries.

The strength of labor in the recent steel strike was due to the fact that the Steel Corporation and other companies could not draw upon a labor reserve to take the place of the strikers, for no such excess supply existed. The evident intention of the steel producers and the advocates of the alleged open shop is to have through immigration such a labor reserve available in the event of future strikes. The significant point to bear in mind in this connection, however, is that this excess of immigrant labor in its psychological and political characteristics is entirely different from what it was before the war. If it is recruited from southern and eastern Europe, it will be permeated with the doctrines of revolutionary and communistic socialism. If it comes from northern and western Europe and Great Britain, it will either be strong and firm in its trade union tenets or be composed of the advocates of state socialism. If the latter groups of foreign-born workmen predominated, there would be nothing to fear, for it would mean nothing more than the unionization of our industries upon the basis of standards and principles which have received the sanction of the enlightened elements of the leading industrial and commercial nations. The indications are, however, that the predominating elements will be from the more radical localities of southern and eastern Europe. From their own standpoint, Mr. Gary and his associates, as a result of their activities, therefore, stand to lose in either event, but the menace to the public consists in the fact that

they are being exposed to tremendous material losses and to the impairment of our fundamental democratic institutions, through the misguided idea that the method of achieving business and industrial prosperity is to stimulate immigration and destroy or weaken existing labor organizations.

An intelligent and patriotic industrial statesmanship as regards immigration at the present time would base its method of procedure upon the recognition and strengthening of legitimate labor organizations in the same enlightened way as was done by the federal government during the war period. This would stimulate labor to be a coöperative and not an antagonistic factor in industry. With this as a starting point, through conference and discussion under governmental auspices, labor and capital could agree as to a policy towards immigration which would conserve the public interest, maintain trade-union wages and standards, and make possible a wholesome development and expansion in industry. This is what should be done, and our experience during the war in the control and distribution of the labor supply shows that it is entirely practi-

cable and desirable. It assumes that labor is not a commodity or an article of commerce and that it has the right to collective bargaining and collective recognition.

From present tendencies, however, there is no indication that such a policy will be even considered. There should be undoubtedly, however, a temporary control or exclusion of immigrants at once until the Congress has the time to consider the question exhaustively. When it does have the opportunity for permanent legislation, the most practicable as well as the most possible general principle or proposal which has thus far been advocated is to restrict immigration on a percentage basis, a certain proportion of each race or people to be admitted to the country each year on the basis of the numbers of such races or peoples already resident in the United States, as shown by the latest census returns. The larger proportions of our newcomers would thus be restricted to the peoples of northern and western Europe and Great Britain and would be more nearly akin to us in their political institutions and ideals and their industrial and social aspirations.

Immigration and the World War

By PRESCOTT F. HALL¹

Secretary, Executive Committee, Immigration Restriction League, Boston

THE World War verified at least two things about immigration which had been previously asserted by experts, but doubted or ignored by the public. The latter knows very little about anthropology or the history of various past migrations; and its opinions are largely influenced by its local experience and by the articles and

news items in the newspapers, most of which are inspired by various interests, and which give usually a narrow and immediate rather than a long range point of view.

The first point proved by the war was that the immigration of a million aliens a year is not necessary to sustain the industries of this country. During the war, there was practically no immigration, and at the same time millions

¹ Author of: *Immigration and Its Effects on the United States* (1906, 1908).